

Appendix G

FIRE MANAGEMENT DIRECTION



APPENDIX G FIRE MANAGEMENT DIRECTION**A. Introduction**

The Malheur National Forest will provide for resource protection and fire use necessary to protect, maintain, and enhance resource values and attain land management goals and objectives.

Fire management is a support function integrated with and responsive to the land and resource management direction established in the Forest Plan.

The National Fire Management Analysis System is the formal process used to integrate fire management planning with land and resource management planning. The fire management direction established here will be used to guide the preparation of the fire management analysis. The fire management analysis culminates with preparation of the fire management action plan, which establishes and documents fire programs to achieve the fire management direction established in this Appendix of the Forest Plan in the most cost-effective manner.

Because all forest resources can be affected by fire, managers should carefully consider these basic concepts when forming plans, decisions, and actions:

1. Fire and the exclusion of fire have played a major role in development of the ecosystems on the Malheur National Forest. The exclusion of prescribed fire along with effective fire suppression has complicated resource management in some areas by: (a) allowing residues to accumulate to unacceptable levels; (b) increasing the probability of high intensity wildfires; (c) increasing the threat of insect infestations; (d) decreasing available forage, and (e) changing timber stand composition by increasing fir and associated tree species.
2. Prescribed fire from both planned and natural ignitions can be used to achieve land management objectives
3. Project planning must consider the ecological effects of fire when developing options for effective land and resource management.
4. Aesthetic, visual, soil, air, and water quality concerns will dictate fire management direction in some areas.

B. Fire Management Direction

The following direction is to ensure that fire use programs are cost-effective, compatible with the role of fire in forest ecosystems, and responsive to resource management objectives.

1. Utilize prescribed fire to maintain healthy, dynamic ecosystems that meet land management objectives
2. Maintain an adequate organization of well-qualified prescribed-fire experts. Apply both technical knowledge and field experience in accomplishing prescribed fire needs.

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3. Emphasize fire ecology implications when applying prescribed fire.
 - (a) Use fire ecology and fire management reference documents to guide project development, execution, and evaluation.
 - (b) Integrate an understanding of the role fire plays in regulating stand structure into the development of silvicultural prescriptions
 - (c) Emphasize the use of prescribed fire in range and wildlife habitat improvement projects.
 - (d) Fire will be permitted in wilderness to the extent possible within prescriptions that provide for protection of life, property, and adjacent resources, after approval of wilderness fire management plan
 - (e) Prescribed fire programs will be responsive to national, state, and local air quality regulations and agreements
 - (f) An active inform-and-involve program is necessary to ensure public involvement, understanding, and approval of prescribed fire programs.

The following direction is to ensure that fire presuppression and suppression programs are cost-effective and responsive to the Forest Plan

1. From May 15 through October 15, staff engines, fire crews and lookouts, as dictated by weather, fuel conditions, and budget constraints
2. Each wildfire will receive an appropriate suppression response.
3. Natural ignitions may be managed as prescribed fires in predetermined areas under conditions that meet established prescriptions, when approved by the Regional Forester (FSM 5140).
4. The responsible line officers can require a control suppression response in any Forest Plan management area at any time.

C. Fire Management Analysis

The National Fire Management Analysis System provides analytical methods to determine the most cost-effective fire program to accomplish fire management objectives established by the Forest Plan. This process provides input for land and resource management planning and forest and regional program development and budgeting.

1. Forest Analysis - The Forest process has three components which integrate with forest planning.
 - (a) Level I - The analysis of the Forest's fire management program under the current management situation.
 - (b) Level II - The formulation and analysis of fire management program options, functional mixes, and/or budgets to identify the most efficient program meeting the Forest Plan management direction.

- (c) Level III - Procedures for developing and implementing the annual National Forest fire management program, including preparation of the fire management action plan.
- 2. Regional and National Analysis - The regional and national process determines the kind, amount, and location of fire suppression forces and resources which are considered regional or national in scope and are used but not planned or controlled by the Forest analysis (i.e , retardant planes, smoke-jumpers, etc.).
- 3. Budget Analysis - The budget analysis process identifies the most efficient unit distribution of fire protection funds at any given national or regional budget level and documents the consequences in terms of expected annual forest firefighting (FFF) cost and net resource value changes.



